**Clem Brown meets – Candy Piercey**

On another page you will find my reference to politicians, made in the light (or gloom) of a political-mistrust. I am not a very political person, though I did expect to have my views heard by the great and famous. Nothing of this sort happened. In sheer desperation I thought of calling Mrs. Thatcher for a date, as I wondered whether she would fancy a Chinese takeaway as a nice change from all that Eurostuff.

However, descending from the dizzy heights I normally frequent, I was grateful that a local political person did not avoid me.

Living a short walk away in Lacey Green, she came round to admire the garden and have a cup of tea. She is Candy Piercey, a committed stalwart of the Liberal Democrats, who is probably still breathing fire after the election results. Although I do not regard myself as very liberal, I must say that I found her charming, lucid and nicely objective. If you ask Mrs Piercey a question, your get an answer, and that is more than I can say for a lot of career politicians.

Fair and fortyish, Candy graduated in 1974 as a microbiologist having studied at University College London, with subsequent work at the Middlesex Hospital and the Imperial Cancer Fund Unit. It must have been in the family, for her father was a doctor, joined the RAF, and also worked at the Royal Aircraft Establishment on devices for use in space, taking in medical research along the way. I began to feel something in common with the family as I have known University College and made a contribution to medical research.

With two children aged 14 and 12, Candy has been married for 18 years and has lived here for 12 of those. Husband Michael is head of information technology at Hilton Hotels UK, based at Watford; or to put it another way, he is well into computers and electronic systems. Candy's private passions are natural history, birds and botany, with a special interest in orchids.

So back to politics. The subject has gripped Candy for many years, especially since the '83 election when she felt drawn to advance an alternative policy to the Conservative one. Hence an interest in the SDP alliance, as it was then. She Supported political efforts in the Aylesbury constituency and in local government.

Candy continued through the '87 local elections and become a constituency agent in the General Election that followed, making contact with the Liberal Democrat team, helping in their campaign as the LD and SDP merger came about.

Then there was increased involvement in politics with more commitment as agent for the Hampshire Euro by-election in 1988 and then the Bucks and Oxfordshire Euro election when the Greens came into the fore. Her chosen party was near extinction at one time but Candy is convinced it is stronger now and therefore feels more than justified in supporting national campaigns and seeking long-term influence.

I asked whether she nursed an ambition to become an MP. The answer was NO, for the reconciliation of this with demands of home, family and local responsibilities would be very difficult. In any case she is already a full-time party worker and always standing by for inquiries and advice, even if all this intrudes on dinner-time. I expect she appreciates the advice once offered by an American politician: If you can't stand the heat, keep out of the kitchen!